

Mr. James has given us his company
for a day and night, and returned this forenoon to
his sister, Mrs. Ernst, at Jamaica Plain. She
is in excellent health and spirits.

Roxbury, Dec. 20, 1878.

My dear Fanny:

It is difficult to resist the renewed
entreaty, contained in your postal card, to
be with you at "merry Christmas," especially
when that is backed up by the dear grand-
children. I am sure the pleasure of our
being together on that occasion would be mu-
tual; but, on the whole, I think I must re-
main at home, especially as I should wish
to be with you when Harry is absent on
his contemplated visit to California and
Oregon very early in the spring. I send
my greetings, congratulations, and good
wishes to you all in advance. But I am
almost inclined to hope that you will forego
the usual Christmas tree - it will be such a
tax upon your strength as well as upon Harry's
purse, unless very inexpensive gifts and
adornments are procured; for he has had

large bills to meet on account of your sickness, nursing, &c. - too large to add to them the cost of gold bracelets! Let me say to him and to ~~you~~ you, in behalf of us all, do not multiply your Christmas gifts this way; for the grandchildren here will have a superfluity of presents, and the older folks will not deem themselves forgotten or undervalued if they receive nothing more than Christmas cards. As for myself, I enjoin "total abstinence" from any additional token of affection, seeing that I have just been presented by you and Harry with a handsome and substantial chair for my sitting-room and desk, which must suffice for birthday anniversary, Christmas, and New Year.

When you were here, you discovered an unframed group of myself and your brothers, and expressed a wish to have it. I have had it framed, and forwarded to you by Adams's Express, and you will doubtless

receive it either to-day or to-morrow.

Accept it as my Christmas remembrance,
and place it in any room you think best. ^{I hope it will reach you safely.}

I attended Rebecca Bradford's funeral; but, arriving five minutes' beyond the advertised time, found the parlors crowded, and had to stand in the entry along with others. The effect was sepulchral because of the exclusion of light (an absurd and depressing custom), and I was unable to see who were present. Rev. Dr. Lathrop officiated, and made a long and repetitious prayer, occupying twenty minutes.

This evening Frank and I are going to attend Edouard Remenyi's concert at Music Hall. I shall thus be able to compare him with Wilhemj. Each is peerless in his own method, taste and style. Ole Bull has just had a concert of his own, drawing a crowded audience, and winning much applause. I did not go to hear him, having done so on other occasions. There is nothing like "getting the best unabridged."

The weather for several days has been clear, cold and bracing, and the streets and stores in the city are crowded to excess with purchasers for Christmas holiday. There is no end to the various curious and beautiful things offered to tempt an investment.

Bayard Taylor has quickly ended his foreign mission. When I read that he had been tapped for his dropsy, I felt quite sure that he had but a short time to live, notwithstanding the repeated assurances that he was improving. I fear that the free imbibing of wine and beer, and occasionally something stronger perhaps, and his excessive smoking, had much to do with his premature exit. I deeply sympathize with his wife and daughters.

If it were probable that Harry would not be obliged to leave you for Oregon at the time named, I might change my plan, and be with you all at Christmas. Hoping you will all have an enjoyable time of it, I remain,
Your loving Father.